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BAGHDAD FOR NCT

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: NO GOOD DEED GOES UNPUNISHED: PART II

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of State.
REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

11. (U) This is a Babil PRT Cable.

12. (S) SUMMARY: During a series of recent meetings Babil Province Governor Salem Saleh Mehdi Al-Muslimawi and members of the Provincial Council (PC) related to REO and PRT staff that the security situation in the province is deteriorating as evidenced by the violent June 6 protest at Al-Qasim (reftel). The recent rash of attacks against both Coalition Forces (CF) and Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), however, has only solidified the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI)-dominated PC's conviction that Babil Police Chief General Qais Hamza Aboud Al-Momouri is the wrong individual to command the Iraqi police forces in the province. It is also highly possible that the governor and the PC are exploiting these recent events as an excuse to acquire further control over all ISF in Babil. END SUMMARY.

13. (C) During a June 14 Provincial Council Reconstruction Development Committee meeting the governor, the PC Chair and one PC member presented a short video, which showed portions of the protest at Al-Qasim (reftel). In line with previous information received by the PRT, the angry demonstrators protested outside of the city's municipal building and severely damaged the governor's U.S.-provided armored SUV with rocks and sticks. The short clip additionally showed that Iraqi Police (IP) assigned to protect the venue failed to intervene or even attempt to appease the disorderly crowd.

14. (C) The governor and the PC members reiterated during a June 15 meeting at the REO that the failure of the IPs to act demonstrated at best Qais' incompetence and at worst his loathing of legitimately elected officials. One PC member stated, "When mortars landed near the REO the other day, General Qais arrived within five minutes. When the governor and PC members were attacked by protesters at Al-Qasim, General Qais took an hour and a half." Al-Muslimawi more forcefully noted, "Are the governor and PC members not important enough to have police protection?"

15. (C) The governor further articulated that additional "security infractions" will produce decidedly negative consequences for the capital and therefore the nation as a whole. The violence at Al-Qasim, he noted, can easily spread throughout Babil and beyond. The possibility of such an increase, one PC member stated, has led the Babil provincial government to create a new committee directly charged with the coordination of all Babil security forces, including the Iraqi Army and the police forces.

¶16. (C) Dr. Usama, a member of the PC, charged that the problem with Qais runs much deeper than professional competency. Qais, he maintained, could have resolved his personal problems with the PC through compromise. (COMMENT: Dr. Usama did not articulate what type of compromise he or the PC wanted from Qais. END COMMENT). Usama explained that General Qais - and not the Babil PC - aspires to control the provincial security forces for the purpose of establishing a dictatorship over the province. Furthermore, Usama stated that Qais' continued insistence to bypass the recommendations of the council and ignore other governmental bodies has not passed unnoticed. "I can do nothing," the doctor concluded, "General Qais has simply gone too far. The security of the province does not rest upon the shoulders of one individual."

¶17. (C) COMMENT: The events at Al-Qasim and the current province-wide deterioration in security have forced the governor and the SCIRI PC members to actively seek REO and PRT assistance and collaboration. The governor proposed a larger security meeting that would bring together ISF, the U.S. military, the provincial government and the REO to discuss an overall strategy for the province. While on the surface, the reengagement with the governor is a positive step that will hopefully translate into increased coordination between the Babil government and the PRT, the governor's possible motivations are disturbing. In all likelihood the SCIRI governor is exploiting the security card as pretext for garnering increased influence over the provincial security forces. The PC's interest in establishing a new security committee and the endless attempts to hold Qais responsible for the events at Al-Qasim certainly lends credence to this probability. Despite the governor's and Dr. Usama's allegations, REO assessment continues to be that General Qais is competent, effective, and non-sectarian. END COMMENT.

FONTENEAU